

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE UPDATE

July 12, 2002

The Colorado Division of Wildlife has made the testing of deer and elk harvested in the endemic area of Colorado Mandatory. Until the Colorado Wildlife Commission passed emergency regulations on Tuesday, testing was conducted on a voluntary basis.

The House Appropriations Committee has approved a supplemental appropriation of 21 million dollars for CWD work. The Senate Appropriations Committee passed similar legislation containing 31 million dollars. Both pieces of legislation have been passed by the respective chamber and now must go to Conference Committee for reconciliation. Congressman Joe Skeen of New Mexico, Chairman of the Conference Committee has indicated that he is willing to add funds to the House bill.

The Department of Defense has established a National Prion Research Program for research into prion diseases, including CWD. They have 42.5 million dollars in funding to disperse for research into prion diseases. A preliminary call for proposals will be released at the National CWD Symposium in Denver in early August.

A 63 year old man from Thornton, Colorado has died from CJD, the human form of TSE. This person hunted deer and elk in the Colorado endemic area for 5 years and the family is blaming the venison he ate for his illness. Although the family is adamant that CWD caused the mans death, they are not allowing an autopsy and brain examination. This would show if it was CJD or another TSE that the man died from.

Saskatchewan has confirmed another case of CWD in a captive elk. This is the 41st captive facility in Saskatchewan to have CWD. This facility is near Prince Albert in the central part of the state. The perplexing issue about this CWD case is that none of the animals in the facility can be traced back to any CWD positive captive herd. It is approximately 200 miles from the free-ranging cases of CWD in Saskatchewan.

The Iowa DNR has tested 150 road killed deer since April for CWD and all results were negative. The DNR will continue to collect road kills, animals exhibiting clinical signs of CWD and will also test hunter harvested deer this fall.

Sportsmen in Oregon have submitted a petition to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission requesting a ban on captive cervid herds in that state. It will be discussed at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting on July 12 to determine if any action will be taken on the petition.

A new CWD web site is up and running on the internet. This is the site of the CWD Alliance, which is comprised of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, The Mule Deer Foundation, the Boone and Crockett Club and the Pope and Young Club. Although containing sparse information at this time, it will be continually upgraded to provide factual, science based information. It can be found at www.cwd-info.org